

By STUART EARP: Wokingham Town 2, Wycombe Wanderers 1

PAST WINNERS of the Premier Midweek Floodlight League, Wycombe Wanderers, made a poor start to this season's campaign last night (Monday) when they lost their first match in the competition at Wokingham.

Against a Town side that never stopped running and harassing, Wycombe struggled to find anything like their best form and despite a late rally, were unable to take a share of the points.

The Wycombe team had an unfamiliar look about it with newcomer John Pritchard, brother of Larry, making his debut for the Blues. Although staying with Athenians Epsom and Ewell, John will be available for Premier Midweek games if necessary.

Dave Bullock partnered Ian Rundle at centre back with Tony Amos, John Pritchard and Tony Horseman making up the front runners. Pritchard put in 100 per cent effort but against the towering Wokingham number two Brian Pitts,

was given precious little leeway.

The same could be said of the whole of the Wanderers side who were never allowed to settle while Wokingham snapped like terriers and succeeded in throwing the visitors out of their stride.

Caterer, Pitts and Scott were the heroes in the Wokingham side while goalkeeper Kevin Raine and former Wanderer Charlie Gale were quietly competent.

In the first half Wycombe were restricted to isolated attacks, with many of the moves being broken up by the Wokingham challenge. But in the 14th minute Alan Gane almost put them ahead when he shot into the side netting after a neat one-two with Amos.

At the back, a sound first half performance by Bullock held back any potential danger of centre forward Ray Brill while timely interceptions from Derek Gamblin gave Wokingham little scope on the flanks.

Ian Rundle had a shot blocked in the 30th minute after an Amos corner while both John Pritchard and Amos went close. Amos' powerful shooting always looked likely to break the deadlock.

Raine saved well from Larry Pritchard in the 43rd minute but then a minute later Kevin O'Brien flung himself full length to turn Bob Weatherley's fierce drive away for a corner.

In the second half referee Markham lost his grip of the

game and as a result Wokingham were allowed to become more physical. Wycombe, in turn began to match their tactics and the game deteriorated as a result.

John Delaney came on as substitute for the limping Mick Cooper after 64 minutes and one minute later Wokingham took the lead. O'Brien could only parry a strong shot by Herbert and Weatherley had the simple task of putting the ball into an unguarded net.

Two minutes later it was 2-0 with the best move of the match. A shot from Bullock was blocked by Weatherley who picked up possession inside the Wanderers half before making 30 yards and crossing accurately to Cooper. O'Brien was left helpless as the winger sent a powerful shot into the top corner.

Two goals up, Wokingham tightened their grip even more, bringing back players to help out the defence.

In the last quarter Wanderers at last began to wear down Town's challenge as the home side began to tire. Raine got down well to Larry Pritchard's shot after a Delaney free kick and then Larry watched as his header struck the underside of the crossbar before being gathered by startled keeper Raine.

Wokingham had to crack under the pressure and sure enough in the 84th minute Wycombe pulled a goal back, with a well worked free kick.

Amos flicked the ball to Pritchard who arched the ball through the defence to Horseman. Bodger ran through a bemused defence and forced the ball over the line.

Wokingham just about had the stamina to hold out for the final few minutes, for a victory which they will no doubt regard as one of their best this season.

WOKINGHAM: K. Raine, B. Pitts, S. McClurg, B. Caterer, C. Herbert, M. Scott, C. Gale, R. Weatherley, R. Brill, B. Hill, M. Cooper. Sub.: J. Cox (not used).

WYCOMBE: K. O'Brien, D. Gamblin, M. Cooper, (sub J. Delaney 64 mins) D. Bullock, I. Rundle, R. Williams, A. Gane, L. Pritchard, J. Pritchard, A. Amos, A. Horseman.

Half time: 0-0. Goalscorers: Wokingham — Weatherley 65, Cooper 67. Wycombe — Horseman 84.